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U.S. ALL SET FOR KAMALA VS TRUMP ELECTORAL SHOWDOWN TODAY

The presidential race appears to be hurtling towards a photo finish, with the last set of polls showing a close contest between the two

FIRST RESULTS BY EARLY WEDNESDAY

Over 244 million Americans are eligible to vote, of which 78 million have already cast their ballots in early voting. In most US states, voting will start either at 6 am or 7 am local time. The first results will be out around 6 p.m. eastern time (4.30 am IST on Wednesday). Tightness of the race means, it could possibly take a few days for the final results to emerge | P12

CANDIDATES MAKE FINAL PUSH IN KEY STATES

- Democrat Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump spent Monday, the last day before the election, in key battleground states, making their final pitches to the undecided voters to back them
- Elections for all 435 seats in the US House and 34 seats in the Senate will also be held. Republicans are in majority in the House at present

Jan 20

WHEN THE NEW PRESIDENT WILL TAKE OATH OF OFFICE

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

36 die as bus falls into U'khand gorge

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

A private bus plunged into a gorge in Uttarakhand's Almora district on Monday, killing 36 people and injuring 27 others. The bus was on its way from Likhwal to Ramnagar when it fell 200 metres into the gorge in Koopi village in the district's Marchula area around 8 am. The 43-seater bus had 63 passengers on board when the accident happened.

"The bus was just 35 km from its destination, Ramnagar, when it plummeted 200 metres into a gorge in Almora's Marchula area," Almora District Magistrate Alok Kumar Pandey said. He said the bus, operated by the Garhwal Motor Owners Association, had left Pauri in the state's Garhwal region on Sunday evening for Ramnagar, about 250 km away.

Commandant Arpan Yaduvanshi of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) told this newspaper that four SDRF teams were dispatched to the site upon receiving information about the incident. "We received information about the accident at 8.45 am on Monday. Immediately, four SDRF teams were dispatched. Our personnel pulled out the injured and the bodies of those killed by breaking the glass and cutting through iron sheets of the bus," he said.

Soon after the incident, Assistant Regional Transport officials of the Pauri and Almora districts were suspended on orders of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. The chief minister announced ₹4 lakh ex-gratia for the next of kin of the deceased and ₹1 lakh for those injured. Separately, the Prime Minister's Office announced ₹2 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured.

Chief Minister Dhami instructed the Commissioner of Kumaon, Mandal Deepak Rawat, to conduct a magisterial inquiry into the accident.

10 WOMEN AMONG DEAD

Of the 36 killed, 10 are women. Twenty-eight people died on the spot and eight succumbed to injuries in the Ramdutt Joshi Joint Hospital, Ramnagar

RETURNING TO WORK

An official of the SDRF said the bus was carrying people who were returning to work after spending the long Diwali weekend at home

Rescuers look for survivors amid the mangled remains of the bus | PTI

Khalistani attack on Canada temple cowardly: Modi

People beaten up, consular event disrupted; 3 held; violence unacceptable, says Trudeau

YESHI SELI AND HARPREET BAJWA @ New Delhi/Chandigarh

AMID a diplomatic chill between India and Canada, Khalistani radicals attacked devotees on the premises of a temple in Brampton, drawing widespread condemnation, including from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Videos showed protesters with Khalistani flags attacking people and indulging in fist-fights at the Hindu Sabha temple in Brampton on Sunday, disrupting a consular event co-organised by the temple authorities and the Indian Consulate there.

The attack happened despite the presence of the Peel Regional Police at the site. The police later arrested three persons and slapped criminal charges against them.

"Such acts of violence will never weaken India's resolve. We expect the Canadian government to ensure justice and uphold the rule of the law," Modi said in a strongly-worded statement.

The Indian High Commission in Ottawa shared its disappointment at disruption of the consular camp. "It is deeply disappointing to see such disruptions being allowed for routine consular work, organised by our consulates with fullest cooperation of local co-organisers. We also remain very concerned for the safety of applicants, including Indian nationals, on whose demands such events are organised," the Indian mission said in a statement.

India also said attempts at disrupting similar camps in Vancouver and Surrey were also made. Consular camps in future will be contingent on security arrangements made by the local authorities, the statement added.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the leader of the opposition Pierre Poilievre condemned the attack. "The acts of violence at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton today are unacceptable. Every Canadian has the right to practice their faith freely and safely," said Trudeau. "Completely unacceptable to see violence targeting worshippers," said Poilievre.

I strongly condemn the deliberate attack on a Hindu temple in Canada. Equally appalling are the cowardly attempts to intimidate our diplomats. Such acts of violence will never weaken India's resolve. We expect the Canadian government to ensure justice and uphold the rule of law

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

'UNCHECKED KHALISTANI EXTREMISM'

"This exposes just how deep and unchecked Khalistani extremism runs in Canada.... any Hindu who dares to question or resist this is swiftly branded an 'Indian agent', accused of engaging in so-called 'transnational repression'," the Coalition of Hindus of North America said

MUDA CASE

Lokayukta police to quiz Siddaramaiah tomorrow

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

THE Lokayukta Police have summoned Chief Minister **Siddaramaiah** for questioning here on Wednesday in connection with the alleged irregularities in allotment of 14 MUDA sites to his wife Parvathi.

Siddaramaiah, who is campaigning in Shiggaon, has confirmed that he will appear before the Lokayukta Police. "Yes, the Lokayukta Police have summoned me. I will go to their office in Mysuru on Wednesday," he said. According to sources, Siddaramaiah will appear before the Lokayukta Police and later proceed to Channapatna to campaign for Congress candidate CP Yogeshwara, who is contesting the byelection to the Legislative Assembly. The Lokayukta Police launched an investigation based on complaints of alleged irregularities in MUDA in acquiring 3.18 acres of land bearing survey No. 468 at Kesare from Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi and allotting 14 sites to her in upmarket Vijayanagar locality in Mysuru, thereby causing a big loss to the state's exchequer.

Parvathi, Siddaramaiah's brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy, landowner Devaraj and a few others have already been questioned by the Lokayukta Police. A Lokayukta Police team recently visited MUDA offices here and examined records pertaining to the land acquired at Kesare from Parvathi for formation of a residential layout, allotment of 14 sites to her, and other documents related to the 3.18 acres of land.

JITTERY MARKETS TUMBLE AHEAD OF TIGHT U.S. POLLS

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

INDIA'S equity markets fell sharply on Monday with benchmark indices NSE Nifty and BSE Sensex plummeting up to 2% in intraday deals to their lowest level in four months. The fresh sell-off is attributed to the nervousness ahead of the US presidential election, continuous FPI/FII selling, and a disappointing September quarter earnings season. According to analysts, expectations of a fresh stimulus package by China to prop up growth also triggered selling in Indian stocks.

Markets across the world are feeling the impact of a close contest between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris as the world's biggest economy is all set to elect its next President.

"We believe Harris' win will be neutral/mean continuity for the economy, equities, and other asset classes. Trump would have a reasonable impact on emerging markets (EMs), equities, and currency due to de-globalisation. Amongst EMs, we expect relatively positive impact for India in the long-run," said Anjali Verma and Navaneeth Vijayan of Phillip Capital in a recent note.

The US Federal Reserve's policy outcome is scheduled for Thursday, with the street anticipating a 25-basis-point rate cut. However, this may not have a favourable impact on the market, as the rate cut is already priced in.

WHY THE MARKETS CRASHED

1. Uncertainty ahead of US presidential elections
2. Relentless selling by foreign investors
3. Expectations of a fresh stimulus package by China

SENSEX 78,782.24 ▼ 941.88

NIFTY 23,995.35 ▼ 309

MANIC MONDAY ₹8 LAKH CR wiped out as market cap falls from ₹448 lakh cr to ₹442 lakh cr ₹4,329.79 CR pulled out by FIIs on Monday

DEADLY DARE

Man takes on 'paper bomb' challenge, dies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A 32-year-old man, who took on a challenge to sit on a "paper bomb" firecracker, died two days after he suffered serious injuries.

The incident took place near Weavers' Colony in Konanakunte police limits. Six people, all aged between 25 and 35, have been arrested in this connection.

The deceased has been identified as Shabarish M, a mason from Weavers' Colony. The accused have been identified as Shabarish's friends Naveen Kumar, Dinakaran, Sathyavelu, Karthik, Sathish and Santosh Kumar, all masons.

Police said on Thursday around 9.30 pm, Shabarish and his friends had a booze party. One of Shabarish's friends challenged him to sit on the "paper bomb", claiming they would give him a new autorickshaw if he won the challenge.

Shabarish accepted the challenge. They lit the "paper bomb" firecracker and placed a cardboard box on it. As soon as Shabarish sat on the box, the "paper bomb" exploded, injuring his private parts. He was immediately rushed to Victoria Hospital, where he died on Saturday, the police said.

The police said the CCTV footage obtained from near the spot shows Shabarish sitting on the box placed on the "paper bomb", while his friends run for cover. Moments later, the box explodes, leaving Shabarish seriously injured.

The police said they arrested Shabarish's six friends after receiving a complaint on Sunday. They have been booked under Sections 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 288 (negligent conduct with respect to explosives substance) of BNS.

Aditya-L1

Scientists hail VELC's 1st science results on CME

Scientists at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru, have reported the "first significant" science results from the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) payload onboard the ADITYA-L1 | P9

Diwali blues: Air quality worst in Hebbal, Jigani

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

AS Bengaluru celebrated Deepavali last weekend, the city's air quality took a significant hit, according to data obtained by Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) from a few key locations. The air quality index (AQI) surged dramatically, with Hebbal and Jigani stations in Bengaluru experiencing some of the most pronounced increases in pollution levels. Ambient noise levels too saw a notable rise, impacting residents' health and well-being, especially those with respiratory issues.

On the day before Deepavali, Hebbal's AQI reading was relatively low at 75, indicating a "satisfactory" air quality level, with only minor discomfort possible for sensitive groups. However, as festivities commenced, the AQI levels soared.

On the first day of Deepavali, Hebbal recorded an AQI of 263, plunging the quality of air to the "poor" category, posing breathing risks for most people on prolonged exposure. Although the AQI dipped to 227 on the second day and to 65 on the third, Hebbal's three-day average AQI was an alarming 185 – marking a 146.7% increase from pre-Deepavali levels.

In Jigani, similar patterns emerged. The station, which reported an AQI of 55 on the eve of the festival, saw this increase to 123 on the second day, with the third day AQI of 81, averaging 136 over the three days. This constituted a 147.3% rise in pollution levels.

Meanwhile, Kasturinagar's AQI soared from 67 pre-Deepavali to an average of 141 over the festivities, a spike of 110.9%.

The situation was no different in other districts. Davanagere reported a staggering 217.2% increase, from a 31 AQI level pre-Deepavali to an average of 97 during the festivities.

Dakshina Kannada, known for its relatively cleaner air, saw a 114.8% surge from 36 to 77 AQI, while Hassan's AQI rose by 131.2%, averaging 106 during Deepavali compared to pre-festival's AQI of 45. Pre-Deepavali, Mysuru recorded 40 and its three-day average was 68.

Raichur, similarly, saw a significant jump, with AQI levels reaching an average of 118, a 126.9% increase. Noise pollution levels also saw substantial increases. Basaveshwarnagar's Nisarga Bhavan recorded an 11.3% rise in ambient noise levels, with readings increasing from 73.1 decibels pre-Deepavali to 81.3 decibels.

LAST SORTIE

Smoke billows from an IAF Mi6-29 fighter jet that crashed near Agra on Monday. The pilot of the aircraft ejected safely | PTI

EXPRESS READ

Apex court verdict on UP madrasa law today

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court is likely to pronounce on November 5 its verdict on pleas challenging the Allahabad High Court judgment that declared the UP madrasa law unconstitutional. On March 22, the HC had declared the Act violative of the principle of secularism.

In-flight pax can access WiFi only when allowed

NEW DELHI: The Centre has clarified that in-flight passengers will be able to use internet through WiFi only when devices are permitted to be used in the aircraft even after it attains altitude of 3,000 metres in Indian airspace.

COURT TO RESCUE

HC for I-T exemption on land relief for farmers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Monday said the Centre should soon address the issue of exempting farmers from paying income tax on the compensation given to them while acquiring their land for public purposes.

I-T exemption is given on payment of compensation under Section 96 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (2013 Act) when the land is acquired.

Local or state statutes such as the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Act, 1966, Karnataka Highways Act, 1964, Bangalore Development Authority Act, 1987, etc., were enacted much before the 2013 Act.

Many farmers, whose land had been acquired under statutes other than the 2013 Act, were unhappy because of income tax on their compensation. Hence, the Union government should take immediate steps to address this aspect and solve the grievances of farmers who lost their land.

Section 96 of the 2013 Act should be applicable to all land losers, a division bench of Justice Krishna S Dixit and Justice Vijaykumar A Patil said. The bench passed the order while allowing an appeal filed by the Commissioner of Income Tax (TDS) against the order issued on April 12, 2023, by a single judge in favour of land losers Vijay M Valsang and others by exempting them from income tax on the compensation paid to them for the land acquired from them. This relief was given in terms of Section 96 of the 2013 Act.

The Centre contended that Section 96 of the 2013 Act providing for I-T exemption on the amount payable as compensation, is invocable only when acquisition of private land for public purposes has been accomplished under provisions of this Act and not under other statutes such as the Karnataka Highways Act, to be specific. P5

It is quite obvious that there is a lot of heartburn in the class of persons who have lost lands in acquisitions accomplished under statutes other than the 2013 Act

Karnataka High Court